

The Satir Categories

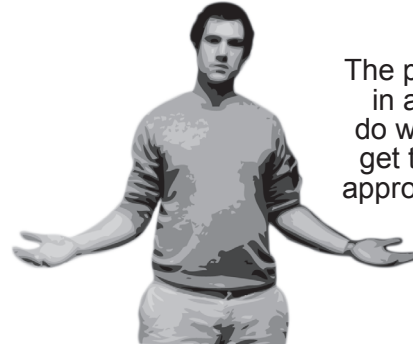
Virginia Satir was a highly effective family therapist whose work can be directly related to behaviour in the workplace. She used a range of very specific descriptions of typical behaviour in order to recognise the cause of conflict in any situation. You will probably be able to draw comparisons between these descriptions and the behaviour of people in the workplace, and maybe even your own. We call these behavioural classifications Satir Categories.

Distracter



These people react to any kind of threat by going off at a tangent. "Why don't we just put that aside now and look at something else..."

Placater



The placater's response in any situation is to do whatever it takes to get the other person's approval - the "yes man" approach.

Computer



The Computer's typical mode of operation is to become very logical and distant.

The best way to handle a communication using Satir categories is to start with the Computer mode. Since Computer does not take any risks, remains dissociated and communicates minimum substantial information, you can start with this pattern.

Once you receive a response from the other person, you can analyze their Satir category and then choose your next category. It is advisable to avoid using the Distracter category at all costs, since it will confuse the other person and you will be perceived as a complex and obnoxious person.

Leveller



A 'leveller' responds to all situations honestly and openly.

Blamer



The blamer's response to any kind of threat is to go on the offensive: "Don't look at me - it's not my fault."

Satir categories can be used to understand the nature of other people involved in a communication. Usually stress takes us away from our natural Satir categories into an unfavorable one. In fact, sometimes we might need to be proficient in other categories in order to handle the other individual. Therefore, in order to be a good communicator, we must learn the aspects and stances of each of the Satir categories. Using all the categories efficiently will open new doors to conversations or public speaking.